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But back of them, sometimes, are world forces which, century after century, sweep on mysteriously perhaps, yet majestically, to their goal.

What will actually develop in society within the next few centuries may involve so radical a transformation that the conventional socialist ideal of to-day would then seem a paltry conception, so far short would it be of the consummate reality. On the other hand, the hard physical limitations of human existence, the possible persistence of race conflicts, the still doubtful ability of democracy to carry an ever increasing burden in administration and government, may long keep the social organization far away from the Utopia of contemporary socialist thought. It is neither possible nor desirable to lift the veil covering the distant future; but it may at least be assumed, with confidence, that changes of real magnitude will come and that, in so far as they materialize in times not remote, they will follow well-recognized lines of progress toward the realization of the fraternal ideal.

The strength of modern socialism is its simple inheritance of the world-old spirit of fraternalism, which has thus far survived all civilizations and which cannot die while man endures.

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ETHNIC MORALITY.

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ONE of the problems that historians of antiquity have thus far been unable to solve may be stated thus: How was it possible for states to rise to a high degree of corporate efficiency, to evolve a civilization that embodied many of the elements of permanence and yet be unable to maintain themselves permanently? So far as the Grecian commonwealths are concerned,—to confine our survey to Europe,—the proximate causes of this decay

are not undiscoverable. A number of states appear on the historic scene almost simultaneously. Although most of the time at war with one another, and in spite of the fact that many of the wars ended with the subjugation of the weaker, two groups were ultimately evolved that possessed considerable internal strength, and around which the rest crystalized. When, however, in the course of events these two groups came to blows with one another, they were nearly equal in resources and ended by so weakening each other that when Philip of Macedon and after him his son, Alexander the Great, took a hand in affairs to subjugate them, the result was inevitable. An absolute monarch who is also a competent military captain will always make head against diversified leadership. Few episodes of ancient history make more painful reading than the account of the extraordinary efforts put forth by Demosthenes to arouse his countrymen against the invader from the North, since to us the outcome is plain from conditions which in the nature of the case he could not understand. His labors were doomed in advance.

There were many factors in the internal conditions of Greece that made its conquest by an outsider comparatively easy, conditions which were paralleled in Rome some centuries later. The growth of the imperial city can be traced in its main outlines with tolerable distinctness. Although mainly a military state, from its inception it was based on tillers of the soil and not on mercenaries as were many of the Greek states. After all its rivals had been overcome, the subjugated commonwealths were generally made a part of the government and accorded the privileges of a modified citizenship. Rome never had a rival sufficiently powerful to jeopardize its existence; for the final outcome of the contest with Hannibal, uncertain as it at times seemed to be, was never really doubtful. The civil wars did not greatly relax the efficiency of the government against external foes. As long as the state continued to grow and to expand out-

wardly, it was strong internally,—in fact, impregnable. But as soon as expansion ceased, the germs of decay began to get the mastery of those essential to growth. For a time the two forces were in equipoise, then the death-dealing agencies slowly got the upper hand, continuing their work of destruction until it was complete. It is as certain as anything can be that if the soldiers of Rome had continued to be as valiant in the post-Christian centuries as they were before, the scattered and ill-organized barbarians, who had hardly anything to rely on except their personal prowess, could never have prevailed against them. Rome was not destroyed by barbarians; Rome was destroyed by Romans mainly. This is evident, among other things, from the well-known fact that the Eastern empire continued to exist for about a thousand years longer than the Western, or at least until the sack of Constantinople during the fourth crusade; yet it was equally assailed by barbarians. Its government, in spite of its corruption, at times displayed remarkable vigor, not only holding its own, in the main, against external and internal assailants, but sometimes even gaining notable advantages over them. Yet the fighting was done by Greeks, or at least under Greek leadership, by men of the same race who were not often enrolled in the armies of Rome because they were less efficient and less trustworthy than barbarians. The difference is perhaps due to the fact that so long as they were fighting for what they conceived to be their own cause, whether under a republic or under an empire, they were at their best, while in the Roman armies they were merely hirelings or conscripts.

It is an almost unique fact in economic history that the Roman empire was unable to recuperate. This retrogression is directly counter to the experience of every modern state. Pliny, writing before the end of the first century, says that large estates ruined Italy and were ruining the Provinces. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that France during the Hundred Years'

War lost half its inhabitants: that its internal condition was deplorable must be taken for granted; nor is there any doubt that the peasants suffered most severely. Yet one hundred and fifty years later, it had again become fairly prosperous. The Thirty Years' War deprived Germany of more than half its population,—some districts lost four fifths;—yet in less than two centuries it had completely recovered economically. Similar changes have been repeated more or less closely elsewhere. The soil is inexhaustible. This is not only proved by current experience since science has come to the aid of tillage, but by the experience of mankind before anyone thought of applying scientific methods to the cultivation of the soil. Germany and France, to say nothing of our own South, had their large estates, as they still have, no less than the Roman empire, but the country suffers no detriment from that cause. Notwithstanding the testimony of Pliny, there is reason to believe that the civilized world was very prosperous during the greater portion of the second century. Gibbon goes so far as to say that this era was happier than any that preceded or followed. The destruction of the Roman nobility toward the close of the Roman republic will not account for the retrogression, since the same fate befell the optimates in France during the revolution, without inflicting serious harm upon the state. There was, moreover, from some recondite cause a great moral revival during the period just referred to among the more thoughtful citizens. To what extent it affected the common people we have no means of knowing; probably very little.

After citing these few facts, which are, moreover, sufficiently well known and are here touched upon merely for the purpose of bringing out the contrast with what follows, let us turn our attention to the Hebrews. Their religious and moral development is without a parallel. This went hand in hand with the evolution of a pure monotheism, although not wholly conditioned by it. To the more thoughtful Greeks, good men were better than

the gods; not so to the Hebrews. Probably as early as one thousand years B. C. men appeared upon the scene in Palestine who not only proclaimed moral doctrines and a religion that were at variance with the popular creed, but rules of conduct as well, that were at variance with popular practice. In season and out of season the prophets preached justice, righteousness, and mercy. They did not philosophize upon motives; they proclaimed the results of their observations in an oracular way. They seem scarcely to have been conscious themselves of the methods of their reasoning. The popular belief regarded God as sanctioning and encouraging massacre, theft, and other unholy and criminal deeds; they taught the opposite. Although these preachers of righteousness may have produced little effect upon their contemporaries, their vaticinations were preserved among the sacred Books of their countrymen and probably began to be read in the temples soon after they were uttered. Herein lies the great advantage that a book-religion has over one that is merely traditional: if it likewise embodies a congeries of moral truths, it has a constantly increasing elevating influence. The mystery is how this monotheistic creed was engendered and kept continuously growing in distinctness. It is well established that the Hebrews were among the late-comers in Palestine, and that in what is called civilization they were far behind all the nations that preceded them. It is no wonder that the Jews in after times began to discern a supernatural factor in their early history and to regard themselves as God's chosen race. This written creed and the morality it commends became their rallying cry and bond of union during the Diaspora, and has remained so to the present time. Their sacred volume begat a feeling of kinship which made the Jews helpful to one another, however widely they might be scattered over the face of the globe. It is not surprising that the nations among whom they dwelt despised them for their pretensions, seeing that they were of no political conse-

quence and had never played a prominent part in the world's drama. They cared nothing for art in any of its forms, despised all religions except their own, and were clannish in the extreme. One needs but to read the works of Josephus and Philo to be convinced of the loyalty of their leading men to the ancestral faith.

The genesis and development of the idea of sin is peculiar to the Hebrew dispensation and performed an important part in their moral development. If we examine the word *sin* apart from the subsequent theological subtleties that obscured its primitive meaning, we find it based on the assumption of the existence of a God who is holy and of an innate moral law. In so far as a Greek or Roman conceived the possibility of committing sin, it signified nothing more than an error of judgment. When the Jew sinned it was generally due to a weakness of the will. This point is forcibly insisted on by Joseph when he says: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Although this story may be relatively late, its moral is in harmony with other passages in the Old Testament. The Old Testament conception of the consequences of sin is more rational than that of the New in that it makes the sinner bear the consequences of his acts: he cannot shirk the responsibility. There is more room for moral growth in the mind of a man who is willing to admit that he has done wrong willfully than if he holds that his evil deeds are due merely to ignorance. In the latter case he is only in need of wider knowledge; in the former, his knowledge is sufficient, but he needs a stronger will in order to be able to resist temptation. The term *sin* and its congeners occur very often in the Old Testament and in more than half the Books. In "Ecclesiastes" it is used but once and in the injunction: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel that it was an error." Although the Hebrew words translated 'sin' are not all the same, there appears to be no difference in the concept that underlies them. While

ritual purification from sin fills a large place in the Old Testament, it finds little favor with the prophets.

It was around the Judaic nucleus that Christianity was first formed. It represented a higher type of morality than the Greeks ever attained to, though they were more susceptible to this partly new religion than the Romans or probably than any other nationality. They were naturally of finer mental fiber and less cruel than the Romans, more ready to listen to new doctrines, less concerned with politics, and mentally more alert. The names of many Christians recorded in the New Testament are clearly Greek. The Jewish prophets with their constant preaching of righteousness, of justice, of a judgment to come, were the precursors of the Christian missionaries in apostolic times; in fact the latter seem in most cases to have begun their ministry in the temples. Probably such peripatetic orator-philosophers as Dio would also have called themselves preachers of righteousness; but they rarely remained long enough in one place to found a school or a society; nor was this their object. Besides, they were far more concerned to excite admiration for their fine words than for their noble deeds. No matter how deeply a Jew might be immersed in Greek thought, he could never quite forget God, nor regard conduct as a thing of no importance. The Preacher, after expatiating at great length upon the vanity and fruitlessness of all human endeavor, ends his meditations with the exhortation: "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment." Very different would have been the advice of almost any Greek or Roman who professed the same philosophy. The Arabs eventually developed a rigid monotheism, doubtless under the influence of the Old Testament; but their morality always remained on a far lower level. It was exceptionally lenient toward sexual irregularities, a point on which the Jewish code is particularly rigorous. To no other people of antiquity would the story of Joseph

have appealed strongly. The episode of Bellerophon in the sixth Book of the Iliad is partly parallel; but the hero, instead of attaining to riches and honor "came to be hated of all the gods, then wandered he alone in the Aleian plain, devouring his own soul, and avoiding the paths of men." Æschylus, whom his countrymen were wont to revere almost as a god, was the author of many noble sentiments; but their potency was greatly lessened by an admixture of fatalism. Sophocles was too well satisfied with himself and his fellow-citizens with him to take a bold stand for any consistent views of a nobler life. Euripides could see little in the world around him to encourage the practice of virtue.

The Hebrews held God to be an all-pervading and omniscient spirit, although in its earlier form their creed is tinged with anthropomorphism. The more thoughtful Greeks and Romans considered him an indwelling spirit that was hardly more than a deification of the human reason. The Hebrews conceived God as higher and holier than any possible mortal attainment; not so either Greeks or Romans. Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," has collected many passages which prove this. I quote a few. Seneca says: "In one respect the sage is superior to God. God owes it to his nature not to fear, but the sage owes it to himself." Epictetus declares that "it is the characteristic of a wise man to look for all his good and evil from himself." Conversely, there are many passages in Epictetus, in Cicero, in Plutarch, in Seneca, and in Marcus Aurelius which clearly express man's dependence upon God. Neither the Old Testament nor the New is more explicit on this point. This inconsistency weakened the force of the doctrines enunciated and left every man to choose for himself that part which accorded most nearly with his preconceived views or with his natural temperament. To the man who is morally strong the doctrine that he is in all respects the equal of the deity is stimulating and ennobling; but such men are rare. Lecky further says:

“Ancient Rome produced many heroes, but no saint. Its self-sacrifice was patriotic, not religious.” A saint may be defined as a man who devotes himself to the good of his fellow-men without hope of earthly reward. He seeks his own salvation by the practice of altruism. While this definition is not wholly in accord with that of the Romish church nor with the practice of those who retired wholly from the world for selfish, albeit unconsciously selfish reasons, it agrees with the ideas of the early and the patristic church. There can be no saints under a polytheistic dispensation, nor under any system in which a future life is not a controlling motive. The conception of sainthood in the Old Testament differs considerably from that of the New; but the underlying thought is the same: that of acceptability to God gained by exclusive devotion to his service. That the Jews would fight fiercely and suffer terribly when their country was identified with their religion, was demonstrated at the siege of Jerusalem under Titus where three factions were animated with an inexpressible ferocity toward each other and with a willingness to suffer more than human nature could bear. They fought one another as stubbornly as they fought the heathen outside of the gates, each party claiming to represent the true faith. While it may be that the prophets were merely political agitators, as Hugo Winckler maintains in his “History of Israel,” it remains, nevertheless, true that here for the first time we find a class of men who persistently insisted on the importance of moral conduct in national affairs. For as J. T. Sutherland declares: “There is abundant evidence to show that more earnest, more honest, more intensely real, more intensely natural and human utterances of greater moral power, or of more permanent religious significance to the world, were never penned, than some of these prophecies of ancient Israel.”¹ These utterances were not only at variance

¹ “Origin and Character of the Bible.” Boston, 1909.

with the beliefs of most of those to whom they were addressed; they ran counter to the faiths of all antiquity. The disasters that Israel suffered from time to time cannot have been the only cause that inspired this belief, because other nations suffered equally great calamities. When the Greeks began to lose faith in their ancestral gods, their faith in themselves went with the decadence. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever quite outlived the belief that the performance of outward rites would secure the favorable interposition of their gods. When disasters befell or were impending they were especially assiduous in the traditional ceremonies of their religion. To the last the Roman armies either refused to fight or suffered defeat if the auspices were unfavorable; to the last they believed that the coöperation of the gods could be compelled by persistent effort. Xenophon was a representative Greek and withal a man of more than average intelligence; yet he was thoroughly in accord with the popular belief. He enters upon no undertaking, fights no battle without first making sure of the favor of the gods. Both Greeks and Romans, however little they might care for the popular religion, conformed to its requirements. There are few passages in either Greek or Roman writers that reduce religion to the simple formula prescribed by the prophet Micah: "What doth God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" The gods of the ancient peoples were often angry both with individuals and with larger aggregates of men because they were slighted or neglected; very rarely because their votaries did wrong. Greek and Roman writers do not seek to impress upon their countrymen the relation of prosperity to right living, although some of them teach that it is man's duty to be just. So far as I recall, not one of the speakers whom Thucydides brings upon the scene advocates a policy because it is right; it is always shallow expediency. A pagan never becomes a missionary of righteousness like the prophets and the early Christians.

That a monotheistic creed is an indispensable prerequisite of a high morality, although it does not of necessity predicate a high morality, is evinced by the history of the Christian church. With the admission into its pantheon of a multitude of semi-divine men as saints, its morals degenerated. This difference is strikingly shown in the lives of the people of northern Europe compared with those of the south, although both profess the same religion. This salient fact is strikingly brought out by Trede in his "*Heidentum in der roemischen Kirche.*" He saw about him almost daily the evidence that the Neapolitans expected to gain the aid of the saints by the same methods which the Romans employed to constrain the help of their gods. Many persons whose lives stood on a moral level hardly higher than that of the Thugs of India, believed that they could obtain the help of some saint in undertakings of the most nefarious character. The 'walk and conversation' of the votary is not supposed to have the slightest bearing upon the success of the petition. "Help me and ask no questions; if you do the latter and fail to do the former, I shall put upon you some indignity," is the thought that was often in the mind of the ancient Roman, and it is equally often in the mind of the modern Italian.

The four or five centuries that elapsed between the close of the Old Testament canon and the first promulgation of Christianity were an important period in the history and mental development of the Jews. Although chiefly concerned with their own affairs, they had open minds with regard to what was going on around them. As soldiers in the armies of Alexander and his successors, they were of little value. Nothing else could be expected. How could they consistently fight for any cause that did not recognize the one true God? The apocryphal books are sufficient evidence that the thinkers among them had open minds to the mental development of the heathen. We have here, side by side with some puerilities, a noble and notable collection of moral precepts.

Nowhere are wisdom and the moral virtues more highly extolled or viewed under a greater number of aspects. While many of the Greeks and Grecians were shedding their blood in factional strife or as mercenaries, the Jewish thinkers were meditating upon the fundamental problems of social life. While the Greek thinkers were accumulating knowledge of a certain kind, chiefly in Alexandria, or teaching philosophy after a fashion, the populace were spending their time listening to 'some new thing,' or to something old presented in a new form. That the comedies of Menander were favorites in both Greece and Rome is evidence of the frivolity of a large portion of the citizens. So seriously did the Jews take life that neither art, nor science, nor philosophy in the usual acceptance of the term, nor military glory had any interest for them. Everything that lay outside of the province of a monotheistic religion or seemed to be in conflict with it was deemed unworthy of serious consideration.

Nor was their intellectual and practical activity relaxed under the Greek emperors and the caliphs. This is not only evident from the works produced by Jews in the East, but also from the interest they exhibited in the moral and medical sciences in Spain and Africa. At times there was hardly a city in the known world in which there were not Jewish scholars engaged upon some department of human knowledge. Not until Europe became Christian, did they fall into the background. Doubtless the circumstance that they were always and everywhere in the minority except in Palestine and in the main remained aloof from politics, kept their morals relatively pure. The vitiating influence of politics is not only evident in our own times, but was strikingly shown in the development of the early church. In politics, even at its best, what is right and just is always to some extent made subordinate to what is supposed to be expedient and pecuniarily profitable. That the Jews are now more numerous than ever; that they are the only people

who can truthfully be said to have a history extending back at least three thousand years, is not a mere accident. It is the natural consequence of their high moral standard, their altruism, their feeling of kinship with one another, their aloofness from the people around them, and their abstention from war ever since the Diaspora. The foundation for this permanence was laid by the writers of their Sacred Books. Theirs is not only a remarkable record; it is a record that is well worthy of our contemplation and our admiration.

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